

Journal of Forensic Social Work, Call for Papers
Forensic Social Work Education:
Preparing the Next Generation for Criminal Legal and Forensic Practice

Special Issue Editors: Dimitra Lattas, Susan McCarter, Jacoba Rock, and Shelley Turner

The recognition of forensic and criminal legal social work as a distinct and specialized practice is growing globally, as is the impact of this practice area. Despite this, forensic social work education remains underdeveloped and varies significantly across jurisdictions. This special edition seeks to advance forensic social work education scholarship by exploring curriculum development, pedagogical innovations, interprofessional training, and global perspectives on preparing social workers for forensic practice.

We welcome manuscripts related to preparing or educating social work practitioners and students for forensic mental health, correctional, and custodial practice; probation and parole; youth and juvenile justice; advocacy/support for individuals who witness or experience violence; practice in legal settings (e.g., expert witness, family law, public defense, victim advocacy); police social work and co-responding models; etc. The special issue may include, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- **Curriculum and Training Development**
Designing and implementing forensic social work courses, certifications, and programs in undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate social work education, or practicum-based and work-based internship models for training social work graduates for practice.
- **Competency Frameworks**
Defining core competencies and standards for forensic social work education, training, or practice, with related assessment tools.
- **Pedagogical Approaches**
Examining the role of experiential pedagogies and andragogies, such as simulations, service-learning, and field placements, to teach core skills, knowledge, and values for forensic and criminal justice practice, including ethical dilemmas, cultural responsiveness and humility, court advocacy skills, interpersonal skills, system terminology and processes, and de-escalation.
- **Interprofessional Education**
Developing collaborative training and interdisciplinary skills with legal, mental health, law enforcement, correctional, and other criminal justice system professionals.

Support and Mentorship

This special issue will support authors with varying levels of experience in scholarly writing, including practitioners and doctoral students. The editorial team is committed to providing support and mentorship for those whose abstracts are accepted. Our aim is to foster an inclusive, meaningful, and constructive publication experience that upholds academic rigor while nurturing reflective scholarly growth.

Submission Instructions

We encourage the submission of original, author-generated research articles, theoretical papers, case studies, and reflective pieces from educators, practitioners, leaders, and researchers in forensic social work. All should be evidence-informed (all types), grounded in the extant literature, written in English, and adhere to the journal's standard formatting and referencing style.

Submissions in this special issue will undergo a blind peer-review process conducted by at least two reviewers. Still supporting the journal's commitment to scholarly rigor, we diverge from the standard process by requiring all submitting authors to participate in the peer review. All accepted authors will be asked to complete one anonymous review of another submission. External reviewers will also be engaged based on subject matter expertise and reviewer availability. This approach is designed to foster reflective and transparent scholarly dialogue, consistent with the collaborative ethos of the special issue.

Abstracts of no more than 500 words should be emailed to the editor, Dimitra Lattas, dlattas@usc.edu.au by August 21st, 2025. Notification of outcome will be provided by August 30th, 2025. Full article submissions are due on November 31st, 2025.

If you would like to contribute to the special edition, have any questions, or if you would like further details of the support and mentorship process, please email Dimitra Lattas dlattas@usc.edu.au.